

Form FHA 021-4

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA**

TO:
State Office
Area Office

**STATE PROCEDURE
NOTICE**

ISSUE NO. PA PN #268

DATE: 10/29/02

RURAL DEVELOPMENT MANUAL CHANGE

PA Instruction 2006-Z

GENERAL – Clarification on the proper use of Government equipment, specifically those related to Information Technology (IT). This information is to be used in conjunction with RD Instruction 2006-Z that outlines Information Systems Security. This PA PN should be used as a supplement to this section of RD Instructions.

REMOVE:

None – This is a supplement, not replacement.

INSERT:

PA PN #268 dated October 29, 2002
following RD Instruction 2006-Z

The purpose of this memo is to serve as a reminder of the information contained within the Rural Development Information Systems Security Handbook regarding the proper use of Government equipment. Government equipment includes, but is not limited to: personal computers and related peripheral equipment and software, library resources, telephones, facsimile machines, photocopiers, office supplies, Internet connectivity/access, and E-mail. Government equipment is intended for official use only. DR 3300-1, Telecommunications and Internet Services and Use, authorizes the limited personal use of telecommunications resources by USDA employees in the workplace on an occasional basis, with prior supervisory approval, provided that the use occurs during the employees' non-work time, involves minimal expense to the Government and does not interfere with official business.

Some examples of inappropriate personal uses of Government property, facilities, or services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Access to bulletin boards or other public forums without Agency approval.
- Install and or use any software unless authorized by management. This includes home use software, screen savers, games, etc.
- Develop a book for publication.
- Develop appeals for altruistic causes without Agency approval.
- Use the equipment related to other employment or consulting for personal gain.
- Share assigned computer ID and password with another user, or share with a user who is not authorized to have access to that application or program.
- Creation or transmission of chain letters.
- Creation/Viewing/Downloading of the following: Sexually explicit or sexually oriented materials; Gambling; Activities related to commercial or other non-Government business purposes; Sites depicting, encouraging or espousing the use of violence.
- Use that could cause congestion, delay, degradation, or disruption of service to any Government system or equipment.
- Unauthorized acquisition, use, reproduction, transmission, and distribution of computer software or other material protected by copyright laws, trademark or other property rights.

Employees who receive "chain messages" or emails that are automatically distributed should reply back to these messages requesting that their email address be deleted from the distribution list. The only exception to this should be if the information being distributed is Government related.

Any question regarding authorized or official use of equipment in an office should be directed to the employee's supervisor who may contact the Information Resources Manager for answers. Using good judgement and complying with this policy can prevent computer security problems and assure protection of Agency data. The first time an employee is found to be using Government equipment for inappropriate use will result in a counseling session. Subsequent incidents of misuse may result in disciplinary action including deleting that employee's access to that equipment/system or in removal of the employee from the Agency.

Employees who use USDA telecommunications do so with the understanding that such use serves as consent to monitor any type of use, including incidental and personal use. Rural Development may implement monitoring tools to detect improper use and managers/supervisors are also authorized to access any electronic communication done using Government equipment.

Please contact Human Resources/IT if there are any questions or concerns regarding this information.